(a) whether it is a fact that the treatment of cataract and glucoma, through herbal medicines is possible;

(b) whether the herbal plants have been set up in the country and if so, the locations thereof;

(c) the amount required for this project; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) The management of Cataract and Glaucoma, through Ayurvedic herbal medicine is possible. In fact, different Ayurvedic formulations and Panchakarma therapies are described for different clinical subtypes of these diseases in Ayurveda and are successfully used by Ayurveda practitioners. They are useful for both delaying the onset and arresting the progression of the disease. In some cases they serve as supplementary or supportive therapy, owing to their neuro-protective or antioxidant effects, desired in these diseases, Research studies undertaken by Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha, New Delhi and Institute of Post Graduate Teaching and Research in Ayurveda-Jamnagar have revealed the beneficial effects of Ayurvedic medicine in age related immature cataract.

(b) to (d) The Central Council of Research in Ayurveda and Siddha maintains 5 herbal gardens located in various parts of India. The number of medicinal plants maintained for demonstration purpose are as follows:-

Medicinal Plants Garden at Tarikhet (Uttarakhand)-153 species, Jhansi (U.P.) -215 medicinal plants, Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh)-224 species, Pune (Maharashtra)-375 species and Siddha Medicinal Plants Garden, Mettur, (Tamil Nadu) 334 nos. of medicinal plants. In the above gardens common medicinal plants of Ayurvedic and Siddha medicine systems of particular zone are being maintained for demonstration purpose. One project has been sanctioned by National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), New Delhi to Sowa Rigpa Research Institute, Leh under CCRAS for Cultivation of Medicinal Plants of the Himalayan region.

An amount of Rs. 1.08 crore has been approved for developing the above Herbal gardens during 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Vacant posts of pharmacists

1592. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that some posts of Allopathic Pharmacists and Homoeopathic Pharmacist in CGHS Delhi are lying vacant as on date;

(b) if so, the number of posts which are lying vacant as on date, category-wise;

(c) the reasons for keeping the posts vacant so far;

(d) by when these vacancies are likely to be filled up;

(e) the number of Allopathic and Homoeopathic pharmacists retired, from CGHS Delhi region during last three years;

(f) the number of Homoeopathic pharmacists who joined, CGHS Delhi region during last three years?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (d) 64 posts of pharmacists (allopathic) and 1 of pharmacist (homoeopathic) are lying vacant. Interviews for filling up of the posts of allopathic pharmacists were held and based on the performance of the candidates, offers for appointment have so far been issued to 31 candidates.

As the Ministry of Finance had directed that no vacancies in CGHS should be filled up without implementation of report of the Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of the Department of Expenditure. The report was implemented after having discussed with the staff side also. With the issue of orders for implementing the report of the SIU, action to fill up the vacancies was initiated.

(e) 26 allopathic pharmacists and 2 homoeophathic pharmacists retired from service during last three years.

(f) 6 homoeopathic pharmacists have joint duty during the last three years.

Improvement of district hospitals in Maharashtra

1593. SHRI Y.P.TRIVEDI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of money allotted to district hospitals for their improvement in Maharashtra; and

(b) how many district level hospitals in the State are having facilities for heart operations and kidney transplantation?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) An amount of Rs. 131.18 crore has been approved for the State of Maharashtra by the National Programme Coordination Committee in the Ministry during the current Financial Year for upgrading the health institutions to Indian Public Health Standards including 23 District Hospitals.

(b) District Level Hospitals are tertiary care centres but not Super Speciality Centres. They are not envisaged to have facilities for heart operations and kidney transplantation. Under the Indian Public Health Standards, Super Speciality Services including Cardiothoracic Vascular Surgery and Nephrology are envisaged at District Level Hospitals, which have 301 to 500 beds.

Advertisement on medicines

†1594. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.